IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (*Amended*) In a digital television system comprising a plurality of receivers coupled to a program source, a method for providing subscriber conferencing with program delivery comprising the steps of:

coupling a program source to a plurality of digital television (DTV) receivers;

delivering a program from the program source to the DTV receivers coupled thereto; and

enabling a conference between the coupled DTV receivers during program delivery, the conference comprising a video conference session being conducted between such coupled DTV receivers, each DTV receiver comprising a video camera and a display, such coupled DTV receivers being associated with a plurality of selected subscribers belonging to a logical group, the conference being enabled within the logical group simultaneously with the program delivery to the selected subscribers of the logical group, the display of each coupled DTV receiver displaying the delivered program and at least one selected subscriber in the conference, whereby collaboration is effectively enabled by video conferencing among the selected subscribers while a common program is delivered simultaneously to such selected subscribers.

2. (*Amended*) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

sending a billing message to one or more of the coupled DTV receivers according to program viewing or conferencing activity, the billing message representing a charge for simultaneous program delivery and video conferencing service.

3. (*Amended*) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

providing to one or more coupled DTV receiver a personalized commercial message, the personalized commercial message being provided to the selected subscribers belonging to the logical group during the video conferencing session.

4. (*Amended*) The method of Claim 1 wherein:

each coupled DTV receiver comprises a [video camera, such that the conference comprises a multi-way video conference between coupled DTV receivers] controller for coordinating simultaneous program delivery and video conferencing among the selected subscribers.

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5. (*Amended*) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of:

adding or removing a DTV receiver coupled to the program source during program delivery, thereby dynamically modifying an active set of the selected subscribers belonging to the logical group for simultaneous video conferencing and common program delivery.

6. (*Amended*) A digital television system comprising:

a program source; and

a plurality of digital television (DTV) receivers coupled to the program source;

wherein a program is deliverable from the program source to the DTV receivers, and a conference is enabled between the coupled DTV receivers, the conference comprising a video conference session being conducted between such coupled DTV receivers, each DTV receiver comprising a video camera and a display, such coupled DTV receivers being associated with a plurality of selected subscribers belonging to a logical group, the conference being enabled within the logical group simultaneously with the program delivery to the selected subscribers of the logical group, the display of each coupled DTV receiver displaying the delivered program and at least one selected subscriber in the conference, whereby collaboration is effectively enabled by video conferencing among the selected subscribers while a common program is delivered simultaneously to such selected subscribers.

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7. (*Amended*) The system of Claim 6 wherein:

each DTV receiver comprises a [video camera, such that the conference comprises a video conference between coupled DTV receivers] processor for coordinating simultaneous program delivery and video conferencing among the selected subscribers.

8. (*Amended*) Digital television apparatus comprising:

a display, a camera, and an interface;

wherein the interface couples to a program source for presentation of a program by the display, the interface receiving a conference signal from a conference participant for presentation of a video conference by the display, and the camera generating a video signal

for transmission to the conference participant, the video conference comprising a session being conducted with the conference participant during the presentation of the program, the display integrating through a frame buffer the program and the received conference signal according to an active set, thereby graphically combining video conferencing with the conference participant during the program delivery.

a1

9. *(Newly added)* The apparatus of Claim 8 further comprising:

a controller for controlling simultaneous program delivery and video conferencing within the active set, the controller being able to modify the active set dynamically by adding or removing one or more conference participants.

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10. *(Newly added)* The apparatus of Claim 8 wherein:

the interface receives a billing message representing a charge for simultaneous program delivery and video conferencing service or a commercial message associated with the active set.